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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001556

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SUBJECT: TURKISH MFA CONSULTATIONS WITH IRAN

REF: ANKARA 1417

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: MFA Deputy Undersecretary for the Middle East and South Asia Feridun Sinirlioglu used his consultations in Tehran June 10-14 to review developments in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Lebanon. In debriefing Ambassador June 15, Sinirlioglu said he pressed for but did not get an explanation of the Iranian weapons bound for Syria that were discovered on a train in Turkey. The Iranians regard enrichment suspension as a non-starter, but expressed a readiness to talk about guaranteeing there will be no weaponization efforts. The Iranians reportedly professed a readiness to continue talks with the US in Baghdad on Iraq, and they denied any aid to terrorists there. End summary

No Explanation for Weapons on Train  
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12. (C) Sinirlioglu said he protested to Iranian officials about the Iranian-origin arms shipment that was discovered May 25 on a train bound for Syria (reftel). He asked for an explanation and posed a number of questions that Turkey wants answers to. The Iranians denied state involvement, but otherwise gave no explanation. Sinirlioglu told us that the arms shipment is a violation of relevant UNSCRs. Turkey will report this formally to the UN Sanctions Committee, but will give the Iranians a little more time to respond to the questions posed before doing so.

Iran Nuclear Program  
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13. (C) Sinirlioglu said he came away with the impression that Iran regards discussion of an enrichment suspension as a non-starter. The Iranians are in a "post-suspension period." The next issue is weaponization, and the Iranians wanted him to know that they are ready to talk about ways to guarantee there will be no move actually to construct a nuclear weapon, which work they claimed has not started. They expressed readiness to talk further with Solana, who they said was "more positive" during the last round of direct talks in Madrid. Sinirlioglu commented that the Iranians seem over-confident on this issue, especially in light of the country's economic problems and international isolation.

Iranian Views on Iraq  
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14. (C) The Iranians positively appraised the recent talks with the US on Iraq, Sinirlioglu said. They pointedly told him that they are ready for round two and want this trilateral (US-Iraq-Iran) process to continue. They described in an apparently accurate way Ambassador Crocker's

concerns about Iranian arming and training of terrorists, which they told Sinirlioglu "do not reflect reality." Such action would be inconsistent with their support for Maliki and not in Iran's interest. They emphasized support for Maliki, whom they characterized as a "common denominator" for the US and Iran. They want to help the US to help him "if we also act in a positive way." They urged that the US transfer remaining security authorities to the Iraqis, which they maintained will help to develop the Maliki government's capacity and decision making.

15. (C) The two sides discussed their security concerns on their respective borders with northern Iraq. Sinirlioglu told the Iranians that Turkey has no interest in a large-scale military operation across the border, but that Turkey also an obligation to protect its people, and a right to do so under international law, if Iraq cannot control its side of the border. According to Sinirlioglu, the Iranians listened and said they will try to talk to the authorities in Baghdad and in the north about Turkey,s concerns. Sinirlioglu told Tehran that Turkey wants to rebuild a dialogue with the north, but Barzani and other KRG officials need first to stop their verbal attacks on Turkey and take steps against the PKK. Sinirlioglu said that he expressed Turkey,s familiar concerns about Kirkuk, which the Iranians shared. They said that they have expressed caution to both Iraqi and Iraqi Kurd officials.

Lebanon

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16. (C) Sinirlioglu said that the Iranians described Mottaki,s contacts in Damascus following the passage of UNSCR 1757. The Syrians underlined their frustrations,

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especially with the Tribunal. Lebanese opposition figures made clear their frustrations, too, and said they will not talk with the government in Beirut until PM Siniora resigns.

Afghanistan

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17. (C) The Iranians reportedly shared their concerns that the situation in Afghanistan is worsening. The Taliban is gaining strength daily. It now emphasizes hit and run attacks that are designed to foment chaos, and these new tactics are succeeding. If present trends continue, the Iranians think that the Taliban could be in control of the country within 6-12 months. Sinirlioglu said he raised allegations that Iran is providing financial support to the Taliban, which is a "red line for Turkey." The Iranians denied this, said such rumors help the Taliban, and claimed the real money comes from Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Both sides agreed that the Taliban has become more active in the north and view the recent incidents involving Dostum in that light.

Turkmenistan

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18. (C) Sinirlioglu reported that the Iranians claim to have close contacts with the new Turkmenistan leadership. Both the president and the energy minister had been in Tehran recently. However, Tehran believes that the Berdymukhamedov government is closer to the Russians than Niyazov,s was.

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